lunched with us. There were éclairs — & he pounced to one, & said "Why éclairs?" a question I've never answered: a beautifully urbane, witty, over-cultivated American.

All right: don't send me your book: & I won't send mine. But I will return South Riding.

Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

V.

6th June. 40

I was up last week, but Wednesday was my only free day; & I thought that was earmarked for Lady Balfour. So I didn't suggest it. Also, down such a grill that I wouldn't have let you come anyhow. I'll write & suggest a Thursday next week, if we come up. But at the moment, — well, at the moment one can't plan for certain: we don't put yourself about: I'll ring or write nearer the time.

I expect it's right to bring out your book: & we incline to do the same. Only Longmans has a big stall, & ours is very small. I hope anyhow, for yours. I read myself into a state of animosity. And, as you know, I find yours drug very potent. I don't think I was alone for 3 days for one moment: & each brought a

Rota 2.4.63

little fate of the war—each time the door opened or the telephone rang it was war & war—& "Still we danced forward." D'ye remember that quotation! My brain has rich scraps of poetry. Some of them were desperately hopeful:— some "plucking the flower while they may"— Chats my niece Judith boating on the Lake in Regents Park, having just done her repos. "Let never talk about war at Cambridge" "the dead." "we leave that to the dons". Then in came Kingsley Martin— Ron MacCauley,—there we sat in the hot evening, till the stars came out, never lighting a lamp, & gradually Kingsley Martin sucked every drop of life-blood to feed his great purple vampire body. The searchlights are very lovely over the marsh, & the aeroplanes do too— one, a German, was shot over Catrum, & my windows rattled when they dropped bombs at Forest Row. But it's like a Shakespeare song to day— so merry, innocent, & very English. Oh Holmes, my father. No, I dont know of any pamphlet: only that they climbed together. & Holmes was a great charmer,—

NYPL

M.H. Sunday. 30 June 1940

This is only a letter of thanks for what I am about to receive. The book came yesterday, & I've only looked at the pictures. As we go up tomorrow for our 5 days of incessant interruption, I shall read no more, till I can resist it, till next weekend, when, please God, we may be alone. At the moment a great God like Niece is talking to me – about Emigrating to America.

I love the Times Lit Sup + reviews – very Cordial for that milk + water paper.

Oh for never looked back as you turned the corner of Much. Dog & Tit Other night – do you never saw me waving. It was then that

I endeavoured to thank you for coming
all that way in the heat.
My gratitude, indeed love,
was lost upon your grey
Coat & straw hat. . What a
pity there is no mare Language —
for then you would have
done home with the
sound of doing in your car.
No more now. Too hot:
but there the book — Can I
trust the temptation!
Shall I put it in
my bag? NYPL

Yr V.

Rota 2. 4. 63

Monks House Rodmell Lewes.

9th July 1940

My hand has staggered into the last stages of illegibility; so put up, for old sakes sake, with this typed gabble.
I did put off reading till this week, end, and now only put down flying impressions as they rise— I am talking about your book. And you never signed my copy--damn you.
First: no; its not so brilliant as the other; because of course you bagged all the high lights for that; but its xxxx richer; more luminous; and to my mind more sequacious.
2.... One always compares 'I' reading to 'I' writing. On the whole as I read, Virginia comes off very badly compared with Ethel; can't think how Ethel ever liked me, such a new moon slip of a life, compared with her full orange harvest glow.
How when shes picked every plum off the tree, can she have fingered my crude little unripe apple?
Those are two rapid and rather devastating impressions. Theyre quite genuine and I think interesting. For what impresses me in this book more than in the others, is your ripeness. In fact I did wish, had I had a pencil, and no scruples about marking margins, to mark down some of your half conscious wisdom.
And then it pulls together, the whole drag net of your various trophies; oh how many people youve known; but that I always realised. What I never before did justice to was the humility , which I like better

than the brilliancy.

3.... but I wonder how it feels to do it. I mean to be so candid; and convinced that the public will be enthralled. I couldnt do it; but then you can. How? By having some kind of settled conviction? Its a curious light on your psychology; that you can confess so openly, what I should have hidden so carefully. And of course as I see, youre aboslutely right. Yes, I get a great deal more of Ethel this way than any other. "

4.... "Mum chance,..what a good word; how that expresses your rapid random but after all very carefully aimed English. Oh and then finally--but I'm writing against time, so this isnt finally; only a string of perfectly inconsequent exclamations-- how rightly and soberly it closes. D'you know for the first time H B comes home to me? That end is so moving. His silence when he knew he had cancer. And yours too; as if the lights lowered and yet one saw everything.

But one thing I must protest; it isnt the end. Oh no. When youve got all the themes alive and combined you dont end them here. You go on. There must be artistically as well as humanly another volume. Really I cant argue the question; for its as if you had got us all listening; and promised us that we shall have the final ~~curtain~~ harmony. You cant then stop; without breaking faith.

Lord how I envy you , compared with my tethered and literal rubbish heap grubbing in R F., this complete and free handed and sweeping and profound revelation.

Heres lunch; and rations to weigh out.

So I811 send this not as a statement but only as a huddle of little chirps.

V.

Rota 2.4.63

NYPL

I spoke to the Women's Institute yesterday about the Dreadnought hoax. And it made them
Cough - Just so think
this proves, beyond a doubt,
that I have a heart?

Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

24 July

40

I'm here at the moment - here being a
place much visited by German raiders.
It's odd, rather satisfactory, how one
gets accustomed, at least to this
neighbourhood, to the sound of a
bomb a two dropping over Rughton - If they
dropped in the garden, doubtless this facade,
would break, & cat-wound turn to a Coward.
I wish I had it on a whole week of
an Avant human voice — London last week —
come between me & pen book. However, it
worked: & in answer to your question, about
Sequacious (a word Coleridge uses) it means
connected: as I used it to indicate a
fluidity of currency, Howsomever, in the
book, which, I hope I didn't find it so
created a high stomached, as I liked. For
so the characters come together, more
subtly: that I think why I praised
HB more fervently this time. He was

too quiet, many tinted to survive the abandonment -
Emphasis of the other books. Here you let him grow.
I never agree that one book is "the best".
Unless I count one's Shakespeare - & how few you are! -
I believe every book is only a fragment; & one may
be a begetter or a begot fragment; but to complete the
whole one must read them all. Certainly I do not
like things said in this one that I didn't in Imps! &
t'other way about. That's, partly, why I want you to
Continue. Because you do Continue, being, that
God, not a finished precious vase, but a porous
receptacle that says elegantly, smells elegantly, but does as
Soaking up the dew, the rain, the shine & whatever
else falls upon the earth. But that the point of being
Shut tight? Now Vernon Lee, I daresay, Completed her
Shape, & was then dried & shellike. Well, I must risk
you as mordantly. No, Must send you
R.F: because, dear Ethel, it's no more your book than
Mervin a Baring was mine. And I don't like to
think of you nuthing your eyebrows, furrowing up your
forehead. No. Let it lapse: & one of these days I'll
write something you'll like to like a duck: & so I hope.
) Can't say what I'm doing next week: also a
vast leap in the dark. So I'll leave it to
the moment & the telephone, as before.
Now it's clouding over: is there time for a game of
bowls? That's my passion. V.

NYPL

Rota 2-4-63

Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

16th Aug. 40

My opinion of you as a critic has gone up almost to fever height. I suppose I wronged you, but I thought. Shall we never see what I've been at. Still day by day is a dull meticulous look about her dull pedantic man. And then you do pick up the trail at once – well, at least reading – & follow it with your nose to the ground & pounce upon the heart & centre of the book as though you'd track Ted – green light at every hour.

Of course I dimmed those lights deliberately. That was my intention – to lead my reader on, till without my showing him he (or she) saw. How Vita didn't see: but you did. I thought a miracle of divination. It was an experiment in self suppression; a gamble in R's power to transmit meaning. And

so rich & to me alive & various &
markedly was he that I was certain he
would shine by his own light, & better
than through any painted shade of mine.
Lord! how I sweated! But to my
amazement, it succeeded. That is, it rolling;
the public does see Roger plain: in
fact we're printing a second Edition — &
now a third is to be ordered — Heres
an air raid siren . . . .
Then Mrs. Ellis come to borrow my
fake fur for a village play. Then to borrow
my niece Juliet & her young man to read.
I'm afraid, in this racket. there no
Chance of writing a coherent thanks: all
the same I was very happy reading your
letter. And amazed and more, at the
surprises you had under your 3 cornered
hat. Oh Jo, send me your
marginalia — please do — & any
further comments — about Roger. &
about the invisible V — The
submerged V. I rather relish her,
the young under . . . . V.

Rota 2.4.43

NYPL